



## The Church Reopening Plan: (Revised 9/14/2020)

### A Summary

#### Laingsburg United Methodist Church

Laingsburg UMC, as the Body of Christ, commits to caring for all of God's creation, including the health and lives of our neighbors. This will require commitment to healthy practices, imagination, perseverance, and certainly hopefulness. To maintain this commitment, this *Church Reopening Plan* has been prepared and approved by LUMC leadership in accordance with the guidelines from the Michigan Conference of The United Methodist Church

It is important to note that, while public health conditions surrounding COVID-19 will likely improve over time, things may not unfold in exactly the way we anticipate and hope. For this purpose, it may become necessary for the church to return to an earlier phase in the *Church Reopening Plan*. We hope for good and healthy progress!

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### “SAFER AT HOME”

This will remain our current status until Governor Whitmer lifts the “Stay-at-Home” order and we are advised by the Michigan Conference of The United Methodist Church that it is safe to move to the first phase of the *Church Reopening Plan*.

- Sunday Worship will continue to be shared online through Facebook and YouTube.
- The church building will remain closed.
- Bible studies, prayer meetings, small groups, and committees will meet online. *Groups not already doing so are encouraged to explore this possibility.*
- Pastoral Care will continue to be given remotely (i.e. “Here for You” hours, telephone, etc.)
- The church office will remain closed with staff working from home as possible.
- The Laingsburg Area Food Bank (LAFB) will provide curbside service during posted times. Safety precautions will be used.

### PHASE 1: ESSENTIAL OFFICE & WORSHIP MINISTRY

Phase 1 will begin when Governor Whitmer lifts the “Stay-at-Home” order and we are advised to do so by the Michigan Conference of The UMC.

- Sunday Worship will continue to be shared online, but will be recorded in the sanctuary.
- The church office will be open for usual hours beginning June 1, 2020. Office volunteers will be allowed on limited basis.
- The church building will remain closed to non-staff. There will be no building rentals
- Bible studies, prayer meetings, small groups, and committees may now meet in-person with full mask compliance, social distancing, and no more than 10 people. Sign-in sheets and proper cleaning protocols must be completed.
- Pastoral Care will continue to be given remotely (i.e. “Here for You” hours, telephone, etc.) or via socially distanced visits at the pastor's discretion.
- Funerals and weddings in the church will be limited to 10 people or fewer.
- The Laingsburg Area Food Bank (LAFB) will provide curbside service during posted times.

### PHASE 2: REGULAR OFFICE HOURS & EARLY IN-PERSON WORSHIP

Phase 2 will begin when the governor's office and the Michigan Conference of The UMC allow for in-person gatherings of 50 people or fewer. (*Note: the in-person limit of 50 may change depending on recommendations from public health officials and the governor's office*).

#### IN-PERSON WORSHIP

- We will begin holding in-person worship in the sanctuary for attendances of 50 or fewer people.
- The in-person worship service will continue to be streamed online for at-home viewing.

- On Sundays, the building's ramp entrance (from the parking lot) will be opened at 9:50am and closed 10 minutes following the worship service's conclusion.
- The sanctuary will be arranged for social distancing precautions ("If you live together, you may sit together").
- All people in attendance will be required to wear a mask. Appropriate masks will be supplied for anyone without one of their own. Hand sanitizing stations will be placed at the entrance and throughout the building.
- Holy Communion and Baptism will be postponed until it is safe to resume their practices.
- In-person worship will temporarily look and feel differently:
  - o We will refrain from congregational and solo singing of hymns and other music.
  - o We will have no-touch alternatives for greeting one another, collecting the offering, and conducting worship.
  - o Fellowship time before and after worship, including coffee hour, meals, potlucks, etc. will be postponed until such events are deemed safe.
  - o We will be dismissed from the sanctuary row by row so that we can all safely exit to the parking lot while maintaining social distance practices. Mingling in the parking lot is discouraged.
- Funeral and wedding services in the church will be limited to 50 people or fewer, with mandatory masks for each person and careful attention to social distancing practices.

#### **GROUPS, COMMITTEES AND MINISTRY TEAMS**

- There will be no building rentals at this time.
- In-person Vacation Bible School, children and youth programming will be postponed until it's safe to resume these in-person programs. Virtual options are encouraged!

#### **THE CHURCH OFFICE & BUSINESS**

- Regular office hours and business functions will resume with social distancing and mask wearing required for all those present in the building.
- The Laingsburg Area Food Bank (LAFB) will provide curbside service during posted times.

### **Next Phases**

At this time, we're not able to predict exactly what the next phases will look like. Overtime, we'll start to see an increasingly clear picture of what the church's "new normal" will look like. It is possible that, until treatments and preventative medicine is broadly available, masks may continue to be necessary, as may be some social distancing. We remain hopeful that time and progress will also allow for loosened limits on in-person gatherings. As these additional phases emerge, the pastor and church leadership will help define the next phases more concretely. Until then, we remain a church family, full of hope, ceaseless prayer, and Christ-like love for our neighbors.

*Please note that, throughout this Church Reopening Plan, all those considered to be higher-risk individuals (i.e. age 60+ and/or those with underlying health conditions) are encouraged to continue sheltering in place. If higher-risk individuals choose to be present and follow the plan's guidelines, it is important to understand the potential risk.*